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SENATE RESOLUTION 202  
By Dixon

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize Norma Henderson-Housley, proprietor of Norma's.

WHEREAS, this General Assembly is proud to recognize the achievements of Tennessee's outstanding citizens who, through their dedicated efforts and steadfast commitment, have distinguished themselves as business leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, Norma Henderson-Housley is one such deserving Tennessean who is a community leader in Shelby County and operates Norma's, an upscale women's clothing and accessories shop; and

WHEREAS, a native of Hernando, Mississippi, Ms. Henderson-Housley moved to Memphis at the age of eighteen after finishing high school; and

WHEREAS, she began her professional career as a Data Entry Operator for the Internal Revenue Service and the Department of Defense, providing honorable service to our nation; and

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WHEREAS, during that time, Ms. Henderson-Housley began her business career by selling clothing out of her car at sorority and church conventions; a born entrepreneur, she traces her business acumen back to her elementary school days, when she would buy two pieces of candy for a penny and then sell them for a penny each on the school bus, turning a tidy profit in the process; and

WHEREAS, in 1984, she invested \$10,000 from her retirement account into her lifelong dream and opened a store at the South Plaza shopping center on Elvis Presley Boulevard at Raines Road in Whitehaven; and

WHEREAS, possessing remarkable determination and perseverance, Ms. Henderson-Housley overcame numerous obstacles during her early years in the clothing business; at that time, there were few women or African Americans in the industry, and she had to work around high minimum purchase requirements that constituted a form of de facto discrimination against small merchants who only needed a few pieces in each style; and

WHEREAS, over the years, she has earned an unsurpassed reputation among her patrons for supreme service and tremendous quality, and she has gathered a devoted clientele; and

WHEREAS, her success as an entrepreneur has been so great that she has relocated from her Whitehaven store to locations in Hickory Ridge Mall and Oak Court Mall; shoppers will undoubtedly benefit from the convenience and quality of the new Norma's locations; and

WHEREAS, with a strong clientele who drive in from Mississippi, Ms. Henderson-Housley plans to further expand her operations to include a store in the Southaven Mall, which is currently in the development stages; and

WHEREAS, she attributes much of the credit for her success to Maudester Foster, a cherished friend who operated Designer Lady in Cleveland, Ohio for twenty years; the two pioneers in women's fashion have long shared their business secrets and strategies and a close friendship, allowing them each to flourish in their respective markets; and

WHEREAS, a devoted family woman, Ms. Henderson-Housley has also received invaluable support and assistance from her daughter, Valda Stone, who as a young lady accompanied her mother to conventions and markets and worked in the store approximately three days per week during school and even more during vacations; and

WHEREAS, now a third-grade teacher at Oak Forest Elementary, Ms. Stone still works for her mother after school, and she plans to one day join her mother full-time in the family business; and

WHEREAS, a business pioneer in the truest sense, Ms. Henderson Housley has always striven to gain any edge in the competitive environment of women's fashion, including by personally adding rhinestones to plain hats to provide them with a unique touch; and

WHEREAS, through her creativity, dedication, and hard work, Norma Henderson-Housley has distinguished herself as a leader and trendsetter in her profession; she epitomizes the spirit and commitment that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly pause in its deliberations to recognize this distinguished woman for her significant achievements; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That we honor and recognize Norma Henderson-Housley, commend her many professional accomplishments, and offer her our best wishes for every success and happiness in her future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.